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## **Being Camilla: The 'Leisure' Life of a Captive Chameleon**

This chapter discusses the everyday leisure and labour life of a captive chameleon, Camilla. This is important because the leisure and labour experiences of individual animals have been neglected somewhat in the existing literature, with attention instead placed on collectivities, such as species or herds. This chapter draws on data from the use of innovative qualitative methods: video-elicitation focus groups, and auto-ethnography / egomorphism. As leisure activities are often self/ego focussed, I argue that egomorphism may be an appropriate lens through which to gain insight into human / animal leisure experiences. This chapter concludes with the contention that human leisure should be conceptualised as facilitated by Camilla's labour of presenting herself, and performing, for the human gaze, day after day.

### **Introduction**

According to the Shona and Matabele tribes of northern and southern Zimbabwe, respectively, the Great Spirit in the Sky sent a rabbit to inform the tribes about the location of herds of buck, which they could hunt in order to feed their women and children (Alexander 2002). Yet, the rabbit ran too quickly, only managing to reach one village before experiencing tiredness and hunger. Consequently, the rabbit sent a chameleon to the remaining villages. However, by the time the villagers received the message, and reached the place where the herds allegedly were, the animals had moved on. Consequently, today, the Shona and Matabele tribes believe that if someone is touched by a chameleon, they will have back luck, and be hungry, for the remainder of their life (Alexander, 2002). This is a story about animals 'doing work', or labour', intersecting with human labour and leisure interests. In the absence of human effort, the perceived poor undertaking of an animal labour task, on behalf of deities and humans, has led to stigmatisation of chameleons in folklore.

This chapter is based on research I conducted into the 'leisure' life of Camilla, a captive veiled chameleon, who resides in the 'Creepy Critters' hut at Vision Kingdom<sup>1</sup> Theme Park. In this chapter, I aim to enhance understanding of human-reptile behaviour within the leisure experience. In order to do so, I draw on two innovative methods: autoethnography, and video-elicitation focus groups. Through the approach of egomorphism - in which I draw on personal experiences to read Camilla - I offer insight into the subjectivities and everyday life of Camilla, with a focus on her feelings during her 'leisure' time. For instance, when she is happy, seeks attention, or wishes to be left alone. Further,

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<sup>1</sup> Theme Park name is a pseudonym

through video-elicitation focus groups with visitors to the Park, I find that Camilla is *affective*; she has the ability to engender diverse emotions in people during their leisure time, including: relaxation, fascination, and pity. Additionally, participant observation shows that Camilla is *affected*; humans stimulate emotions in Camilla, including fear and relaxation.

This chapter is underpinned by ongoing debates about the welfare of captive creatures in leisure spaces. I question whether Camilla can be said to have ‘leisure’ time when her spatial freedom is restricted, and when under the constant gaze of leisure users. By considering Camilla as an affective, sentient creature, with the capacity to influence human emotions, this chapter offers a departure from much existing work which tend to consider animals as passive within the leisure experience (Carr, 2010). The term ‘leisure’ is subject to multiple and often competing definitions, yet can be broadly defined as “free or unobligated time that does not involve work or performing other life sustaining functions” (Leitner and Leitner, 2012, 3). This chapter concludes that human visitors are at leisure, and Camilla is a worker facilitating this leisure experience for visitors. I will now detail Camilla’s personal situation, before going on to review relevant literature.

### **Camilla’s Personal Situation**

First, I wish to bring attention to the fact that Camilla is a named reptile. According to Levin (2015), the act of naming conveys quasi-personhood; it suggests that the reptile is unique and cannot be replaced. Camilla, a 15 month old female veiled chameleon (see Plate 1), resides in the Creepy Critters reptile house at Vision Kingdom Theme Park. Veiled chameleons (*Chamaeleo calyptratus*) are an arboreal lizard species that range from Asir Province, southwestern Saudi Arabia, to Aden, Yemen, where they live on high, dry plateaus (Schmidt, 2001). A distinguishing feature of veiled chameleons is their ability to change colour in response to fluctuations in light, shade, and temperature, and as an expression of emotion (Mattison and Garbutt, 2012). Veiled chameleons use their opposing toes and strong tails to help them cling to branches (Berre, 2009), and their protruding sticky tongue to target prey in one-fiftieth of a second (Stewart, 2008). Further, veiled chameleons’ eyes often move independently, enabling them to observe two different objects simultaneously (Krysko *et al.*, 2004). As Bartlett and Bartlett (2001) note, veiled chameleons are solitary reptiles, pairs are often aggressive to one another, and thus Camilla lives alone.



**Plate 1:** Camilla

Camilla was bought from a local chameleon breeder, by the Theme Park owners, at the age of three months, and has since resided in the 'Creepy Critters' Hut (see Plate 2). The naming of this hut is not without significance, serving to promote Camilla, and the other inhabitants (see Plate 3), including a corn snake, Chinese water dragon, Burmese python, bearded dragon, and spectacled caiman, as 'odd' entities.



**Plate 2:** Creepy Critters' Hut



**Plate 3:** Camilla's vivarium (centre) and surrounding vivaria

Upon walking into the creepy critters' hut, one is greeted by an atmospheric tropical rainforest soundtrack. While such environmental manipulation is intended to create a simulacra of the wild (Neo and Ngiam, 2014), devices such as darkening the viewing area, whilst lighting up each exhibit, are also

for the benefit of leisure users, in that it provides both optimum visibility and heightened dramatic effect (cf. Markwell and Cushing 2009). Inside Camilla's 4ft x 4ft glass vivarium, simulation of the natural habitat chameleons live in is also achieved through the creative use of artificial plants and branches (see Plate 4). Further, as Plate 5 shows, each vivarium is accompanied by a brief explanation of its contents.



**Plate 4:** Camilla in her Vivarium



**Plate 5:** Information Board Below Camilla's Vivarium

It is noteworthy that no information is provided on the specific individual in these fact files. Visitors are only likely to learn Camilla's name and gender by attending 'meet the creepy critters', an activity occurring at 11.30am daily, during which the staff who care for the reptiles provide further details on them.

Having detailed Camilla's personal situation, I now outline literature on 'individual animals', inter-species affective encounters, and egomorphism, respectively. I am engaging with this material because the experiences of individual animals in leisure experiences has been somewhat sidelined, in favour of collectivities, such as species and herds (Bear, 2011). Further, by exploring inter-species affective encounters, I demonstrate that chameleons are far from passive in human leisure experiences. Finally, I outline egomorphism, an approach which uses the *self* as the primary reference point for understanding animals (Milton, 2005); in comparison to anthropomorphism, which is based on the attribution of *human* characteristics to animals. As leisure activities are often self/ego focussed, egomorphism may be an appropriate lens through which to gain insight into human / animal leisure experiences.

### **Individual animals in Leisure Spaces**

Scholars adopting an animal geography perspective are now legion. However, the focus on collectivities elides differences between individual animals (Bear 2011). When researchers have focused on individual animals, it has typically been furry pets, of which Goode's (2006) account of play with his dog Katie is a fine example. There are, however, a few notable exceptions. For instance, Whatmore (2002, 231), through an ethnographic account of Duchess and Gay, elephants at Paignton Zoo, illustrates that these animals are "active agents who make a difference to the ways in which...heterogeneous social networks take and hold their space". Whatmore (2002, 5) investigated different "becomings" of elephant, with a focus on Duchess' experiences of moving to a new enclosure that aimed to mimic her home habitat of the African savannah. However, Philo (2005, 829) critiques Whatmore's (2002) writings on elephants, contending that the animals "still remain somewhat shadowy presences". Whatmore's (2002) findings could potentially have been of greater interest if she had conducted more in-depth observations of the individual animal.

More recently, Levin (2015) wrote a paper on Marius the Giraffe. The author explored the decision of Copenhagen Zoo to kill Marius in the name of population management. Levin (2015) argues that the zoo adopted a variety of display practices in the first two years of Marius' life, treating him as 'special'. Here, the word 'special' involves displaying the animal as an individual; having a unique backstory of how he got to the zoo; a unique personality, and set of physical dispositions (Levin, 2015). The author contrasts this with the justification for killing Marius, which referenced zoo objectives, and treated Marius as a mere specimen; in other words, a member typical of a class. Studies of individual mammals in the animal geographies literature are more prevalent than studies of non-mammals. Recognising this, Bear (2011) offered an ethnographic account of a giant Pacific, captive, octopus in The Deep aquarium. Of particular importance here is Bear's (2011, 298) attempt to draw attention to this non-mammal's individuality, stating:

Being a giant Pacific octopus is much like being a 'human' – a number of beings with similar characteristics, but that are nonetheless significantly different from each other. Ostensibly, the octopus is here as a representative of its species. However, this is not just a giant Pacific octopus; this is Angelica.

Despite praising Bear (2011) for paying attention to a non-mammalian life form in leisure spaces, the author could have perhaps made more of the contingency of all actants involved in the leisure space; for instance, staff, visitors, other sea life, the tanks, and stressed their relationality more. By doing so, he may have made the politics of confinement a little more explicit. One means of engaging with the relationality of actants in leisure experiences is to pay attention to inter-species affective encounters.

### Inter-species Affective Leisure Encounters

Humans engage with animals through a range of affective exchanges (Jones 2011). Yet, as Thrift (2004) articulates, 'affect' has no stable definition. In a field of literature whereby 'affect' is difficult to comprehend, Whatmore's (2006, 604) definition is a useful one. 'Affect' refers to "the force of intensive relationality - intensities that are felt but not personal; visceral but not confined to an individuated body". This understanding of affect can be both tied to, and distinguished from, feeling. Affects occur between bodies, and these affects find "corporeal expression in bodily feelings" (Anderson 2006, 736). Following this line of thought, 'affect' can be seen as "a kind of vague but intense atmosphere" and 'feeling' as "that atmosphere felt in the body" (McCormack 2008, 6). Further, both 'affect' and 'feeling' can be distinguished from emotion. As Massumi (2002) puts it, emotion is subjective and, as such, it is a personal experience.

From her analysis of how a dog and its handler discover happiness in the labour of training, Haraway (2003, 2) employed the phrase "cross-species sociality" to express her notion of a mutual feeling between species. In her later work, Haraway (2008) presents animals as mindful, lively, dynamic and differentiated beings that have co-evolved with humans, and have, to draw on Latour (2004a), 'learned to be affected' by each other. However, in the article *Non-Companion Species Manifesto*, Dwyer (2007) used his perception that his son's snakes and lizards would not have mourned his son's death as evidence that Haraway's (2003) inter-species sociality was not apparent between reptiles and animals.

Further, Marseille *et al.* (2012) contend that, at zoos, the attractive charismatic, rare and endangered species, such as polar bears, are those most likely to stimulate affective reactions. Yet, through a study of recreational angling in Yorkshire rivers, Bear and Eden (2011) argue that it is not legitimate to contend that 'other' bodily forms impede inter-species affective encounters. Instead, the authors argue that affective relationships can develop between humans and fish, asserting that "fish are both *affected* and *affective*" (Bear and Eden 2011, 341, emphasis in original). Clearly, there is an impasse as to whether non-mammalian life forms have the capacity to both affect and be *affected*, during leisure times and in leisure spaces. Through the study of Camilla, this chapter offers fresh insights into this debate. Before doing so, attention turns to the transition from anthropomorphic readings of animals, to more personal, egomorphic ones.

### From Anthropomorphism to Egomorphism

Anthropomorphism is the ascription of certain *human* qualities to animals (Blok 2007). Following Milton (2005), the use of the term 'anthropomorphic' to describe human *understandings* of animals is misleading for three reasons. First, anthropomorphism is based on assumptions made by a human about animals, for which there is little evidence in the actions and verbal statements of the animals whose understanding is being described. Second, anthropomorphism assumes that 'humanness' is the primary point of reference for understanding animals. Yet, according to Milton (2005), the *self* is the primary point of reference for such an understanding. Third, anthropomorphism implies that people understand 'things' by attributing characteristics *to* them. Alternatively, Reis *et al.* (2007) contend that humans understand things by perceiving characteristics *in* them.

Recognising the shortcomings with anthropomorphism, Milton (2005) proposes an alternative model, namely 'egomorphism'. From an egomorphic perspective, the understanding of animals as persons, that is – beings with emotions, purposes, and personalities – is based on a perception of a particular animal as 'like me', in opposition to 'human-like' (Milton 2005). From an egomorphic vantage point, I perceive emotions, purposes and personalities in animals for instance: my pet dog, the squirrels that run around in my garden throughout the year, or Camilla the chameleon, on the basis that they are similar to me, rather than similar to the human populace. Thus, as Reis *et al.* (2007) note, egomorphism determines that humans understand animals through their own personal experiences. In short, to echo Lulka (2008), egomorphism is anthropomorphism *embodied*.

Examples referred to as 'egomorphism' in the literature are generally lacking. A notable exception is Hurn's (2008, 30) use of egomorphism in her study of the interplay of sex and gender in the commercial breeding of the horse breed, Welsh Cobs, in which the author contends: "I empathize with the fact that my mare *experiences* what I recognise as broodiness". Further, there are accounts in the literature which are not explicitly referred to as 'egomorphism', yet which conform to Milton's (2005) definition of the approach. For instance, upon witnessing pets being scolded for doing 'naughty' things, such as disposing of bodily waste on a carpet, Vann (2010, 5) notes:

I imagined what the pet was feeling by drawing from my experiences of being scolded by someone for doing troublesome things. When I got in trouble for calling my brother a mean word...I felt embarrassed and ashamed. This experience was the closest thing I could compare to how the pet was feeling in a similar situation.

As implied above, egomorphism is a useful tool for understanding animals. Whilst somewhat neglected in the existing literature, as leisure is often rather self / ego focused, egomorphism may be a productive means of offering insight into human and animal leisure experiences. This study of



Camilla therefore has potential to extend the areas to which an egomorphic understanding has been applied.

### **Methodology**

In order to undertake the research upon which this chapter is based, I used an innovative mixed-methods qualitative approach, drawing on autoethnography and video-elicitation focus groups. According to Spry (2001), autoethnography can be viewed as the convergence of the autobiographic impulse and the ethnographic moment. Louis (1991, 365) encapsulates the spirit of autoethnography, stating: “I am an instrument of my inquiry; and the inquiry is inseparable from who I am”. As such, consistent with the theory of egomorphism, when using this method I wrote personalised accounts whereby I drew on my experiences to extend understandings of Camilla’s everyday life (Holt 2003). Or as Geertz (1988, 79) puts it, I was an “I-witness” to the ‘reality’ I experienced. This shift towards personalised research responds to calls to place greater emphasis on the ways in which the researcher interacts with the culture being researched (Wall 2006). By writing myself into the research, I challenge views about silent authorship (Charmaz and Mitchell 1996), in which the researcher’s voice is subjugated from the presentation of research findings (Klenke 2008). As a result, congruent with Mizzi (2010), I consider autoethnography a liberating method.

I completed my ethnographic observations over a six week period (mid-May 2012 to end of June 2012). I typically visited Camilla five days a week, at varying times, and observed her for four hours on each occasion. In total, I undertook 120 hours of ethnographic observation. As chameleons are “just look, don’t touch” reptiles (Bartlett 2006, 2), non-participant observation was appropriate. As such, I was never directly involved in Camilla’s actions, opting instead to observe them at a distance (Hall, 2008). I kept a small notebook with me and recorded my observations in this, as they occurred. To complement and enhance my ethnographic observations, I used a digital camera. However, as I was in control of the camera angles, and the moments of Camilla’s daily life to capture, it must be recognised that visual imagery is always constructed: never innocent (Rose, 2007). Nonetheless, the approach was beneficial in enabling me to capture snapshots of Camilla’s body language and eye contact (cf. Freeman *et al.*, 2011).

To complement my autoethnographic observations, I utilised a video-elicitation focus group method. This method was beneficial because, as chameleons are both mobile and mutable, they are difficult to capture and represent by the orthodox methodologies of the interpretative social sciences, which are concerned with the collection, interpretation, and critique of disembodied representations (Lorimer 2010). Such methods fail to appreciate the multisensory energies and intelligences of non-

human bodies (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). Thus, to echo Whatmore (2006, 607), it is necessary to supplement the conventional palette of humanist methods, those that rely on generating talk and text, with methods aiming to amplify sensory, bodily, and affective elements. Reassuringly, Lorimer (2010) argues that moving imagery has the ability to make the lively, affective animal come to the fore.

Moving imagery, despite its relative novelty as a research method, is not without criticism. For instance, like photography, videography cannot be credited with producing an objective representation of 'natural' behaviour. Everything, from choosing the camera angles during the filming stage, to deciding what material to include/exclude during the editing process, is subjective (Owens and Millerson 2011). I used a large-screen laptop to show the video footage to focus group participants. I recruited these participants through an opportunistic sampling method, by posting requests on the Theme Park's Facebook page. I sought people who had previously visited the Creepy Critters hut, and were aware of a Chameleon residing in it. It was beneficial to have people who had seen Camilla on a previous occasion, as they could draw on prior experiences in the focus group discussion. I held two focus groups of mixed genders, each comprising eight participants. This conformed to Longhurst's (2003) recommendation of between 6 and 12 participants for a successful focus group. Each focus group took place in a quiet local coffee shop, and lasted approximately two hours. Focus groups took place here, as opposed to in the Theme Park, due to it being a quieter space, with fewer distractions. Supporting Wolch *et al.*'s (2000) opinion, focus groups allow participants to express their ideas in a relatively unconstrained manner, and to react to the opinions of other participants, thus promoting discussion and debate. Having outlined the methods upon which this research is based, I now offer an egomorphic account of Camilla's everyday life in the leisure setting.

### **Being Camilla: An Egomorphic Account**

Here, I draw on Milton's (2005) notion of egomorphism, to illustrate that Camilla is not biologically and behaviourally 'other', and that Camilla, when on display to the public, is at 'work', in a human constructed leisure space. Heeding Milton's (2005) approach, Camilla's inner-world was treated as available and perceivable. As such, I drew on personal experiences, to propose ideas on what it is like to be Camilla. During one observation, I noted:

Camilla appeared happy this morning! She came out from the leaves in the corner of her vivarium and climbed along the branches until she was on full show. Her skin was a vibrant green and her patterning was clear.

In this instance, my egomorphic reading of Camilla being 'happy' was informed by her confident mobility around the enclosure, and the dark green colour of her skin, which herpetologists take to imply a chameleon's good mood (cf. Prusten 2008). It is noteworthy that, other than slight alterations in hue, Camilla's colour did not significantly change during the observational period of six weeks, suggesting a consistency in temperature, lighting, and Camilla's mood. Nonetheless, Chameleons are known to turn red when angry or embarrassed, black when ill, and white when tired (Bartlett and Bartlett 2001). Humans share with chameleons the ability to change colour dependent upon emotion (Changizi and Shimouois 2011). For instance, I, supporting Darwin's (2002) observations, redden with anger, whiten with fear, display a green hue with illness, and become purplish with muscular effort. In sum, Camilla and, by extension, other chameleons, should not be pitted as *biologically* 'other' to humans.

I now argue that it is erroneous to posit Camilla as behaviourally 'other', thereby rendering problematic Martin's (1992) assertion that chameleons are 'supernatural' oddities. For instance, on one occasion, my understanding of Camilla's behaviour was informed by my familiarity with female friends 'showing off' when around groups of people. Through the following passage then, a process of "saming" (Schor 1988, 45), the counter-notion of 'othering', can be seen to have occurred:

When entering the creepy critters' hut at 9am, Camilla was hiding behind the greenery in her vivarium. However, come 10am – when Vision Kingdom Theme Park opens to its visitors – Camilla became much more mobile. This made me think that perhaps she was aware of the presence of the crowd and, much like my human friends do adapted her behaviour in order to put on a show for her spectators. She was parading around her vivarium much to say: "don't bother looking at the snakes, all eyes should be on me!"

My egomorphic reading of Camilla 'showing off' for the benefit of Theme Park visitors, evident through the above excerpt, is comparable to Mr. MacBeth's observation of a marsh wren: "...the little male is the brightly little one. He calls out. He always calls for the female: "Look at me! Look at me! Look at me! Look at me! Look at me!" "I am so great!" (Mr MacBeth, quoted in Reis *et al.* 2007, 151). Mr MacBeth, a teacher who uses egomorphism to facilitate his student's understanding of animal behaviour observation, and I, both draw upon egomorphism to perceive characteristics in an individual animal, in this instance: the desire for attention. Here, I suggest that Camilla shapes her activities in response to visible human presence. From this, it can be suggested that Camilla is 'working'; that is, putting on a performance for her audience in the leisure space of the Theme Park.

Further, whilst Camilla cannot articulate her thoughts or feelings using vernacular employed by humans, this is not to say that Camilla is, as Latour (2004b, 62) describes nature, "mute". The following vignette buttresses this notion:

Camilla seemed grumpy today. On a few occasions she inflated her body and opened her mouth wide and hissed at me. This gave me the impression that she wasn't in a good mood, and that she wanted to be left alone.

As the above ethnographic vignette revealed, Camilla communicated her negative mood to me through gestures, such as the inflation of her body (see Plate 6).



**Plate 6:** Camilla Inflates her Body in a Territorial Display

Likewise, when I feel grumpy, or threatened, my internal feelings are externally visible through facial expressions, and my bodily movements. To explain, when I am grumpy, I slouch and support my face with my hand, whilst when I am feeling threatened, my heart races, I breathe heavily, and become flustered. Through being attentive to Camilla's body language, I deduced that she was fed up of using her 'leisure' time performing for the public, and being subject to their constant gaze. Having provided insight into Camilla's emotions when labouring, and performing, for public consumption, I now discuss her affective capacity.

### **Camilla's Affective Capacity**

The data in this section are largely drawn from video elicitation focus groups. The findings demonstrate that Camilla predominantly engenders positive emotions in visitors to the Park. Further, drawing on my ethnographic observations, I argue that human presence is capable of engendering emotions in Camilla. The majority of respondents reacted emotionally upon experiencing the video footage of Camilla, with relaxation surfacing as the most commonly evoked feeling (c.f. Yerbury and Boyd, Chapter 9, this book, which discusses the relaxation gained through encounters with dolphins).

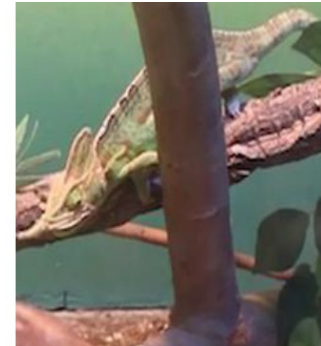
Visitors to the Park regularly expressed the therapeutic affect viewing Camilla had on them. For instance, one participant noted: “having had a dispute with my wife prior to coming here over what time I’d be back for tea, I find it very soothing watching Camilla. She makes me feel at ease” (Maxwell). Despite this, Dwyer (2007, 85) is keen to remind us that “animals are inadvertent therapists”. Further, for many leisure users, seeing Camilla using her rapidly extrudable tongue to devour a brown cricket engendered a feeling of fascination (see Plates 7-9).



**Plate 7:** Camilla  
Preparing to Target  
Prey



**Plate 8:** Camilla’s  
Projectile Tongue  
Snapping up Prey



**Plate 9:** Camilla Eating Brown  
Cricket

To quote one visitor to the Park:

Isn’t it just amazing! I really can’t believe how quickly that happened! Her tongue is so long, and she just snapped up that cricket and, I mean, the cricket wasn’t exactly small. Her ability to do that is just unreal, I never knew chameleons had such a cool talent [laughs] (William)

The above demonstrates that Camilla has potential to evoke feelings of excitement and surprise for visitors to the Park. In comparison though, some participants felt underwhelmed by Camilla. As one Park visitor put it: “she’s not exactly the most exciting of animals is she. It’s pretty boring watching her. All she does is walk a bit and eat” (Elaine). Here then, Camilla’s inactivity and repetitive behaviour evoked a feeling of disappointment. Elaine is someone who wished to be entertained during her leisure time; but Camilla does not seem to be ‘pulling her weight’ on the entertainment front. It is noteworthy that, in opposition to the portrayal of chameleons in folklore, the captive chameleon did not trigger feelings of fear in the focus group respondents. These findings thus also provide a counterpoint to Markwell and Cushing’s (2009, 476) generalisation that reptiles provoke “fear and anxiety”.

In stark contrast to fear, for one visitor to the Park, an awareness of the pressures chameleons face in the wild stimulated feelings of love for the captive chameleon:

In a conservation lecture at Uni we touched upon chameleons and how their habitat is being destroyed so much. Because of this, I love seeing this chameleon in captivity, enjoying itself, away from many of the pressures of the wild (Sofia)

From this leisure user's viewpoint, Camilla is less threatened in captivity, in comparison to the wild. However, it is worth recognising that Camilla did not voluntarily give up her freedom from the wild; this freedom was curtailed for the benefit of human leisure. Equally though, whilst humans are often critiqued for invading animal spaces as part of human leisure (e.g. tourism), it is worth recognising that life in the wild can be challenging for animals (e.g. predators, sourcing food). It could thus be questioned: does Camilla have more leisure in captivity than in the wild? Does she sacrifice freedom and hard labour in the wild, for captivity and contested leisure? I would argue that Camilla's experiences in captivity are much more laborious than leisurely; she is heavily scrutinised and surveilled by Park visitors.

For another Park visitor, Camilla's presence in her enclosure evoked a negative emotional response:

I can't help but, ya know, feel, like, sorry for the little thing. Having Karma, [the participant's own chameleon], I have read quite widely about chameleons and know that the best conditions in which they flourish in is flexariums, not vivariums (Edward)

A flexarium is a nylon mesh enclosure providing optimal ventilation for chameleons. Knowledge about the biology of chameleons resulted in this Park visitor expressing concern that Camilla's vivarium did not offer sufficient ventilation, which could hinder the reptile's everyday life. Nonetheless, whether in a flexarium or vivarium, the limited size of these facilities severely impedes the chameleon's active nature. Consequently, this visitor to the Park pitied Camilla. The diverse emotions triggered from viewing Camilla provide a counterpoint to Marseille *et al.*'s (2012) contention that attractive, charismatic, rare, and endangered species are those likely to stimulate an affective reaction among zoo visitors. Findings from my research lend credence to Bear and Eden's (2011) claim that 'other' bodily forms do not preclude inter-species affective encounters. Thus far, the accounts provided depict a distinctly one-sided relationship, with Camilla being the stimulus of affect for leisure users. However, I now explore the potential for reciprocal affectivity during the leisure experience.

As with Haraway's (2003) account of dogs, the findings from this study illustrate the emotionally rewarding, yet, at times, emotionally challenging, affective interconnectivity in chameleon-human relationships. As such, the following ethnographic observation opposes Dwyer's (2007) contention that the emotional attachment humans feel for many animals is non-reciprocal:

Camilla started the morning on the low level branches, tail curled. Her body was still, and her head moving only slightly. Camilla seemed relaxed in my presence, which made me feel relaxed too. The bond between us was mutually calming and soothing.

On the grounds that my relationship with Camilla can be described as a “joyful intersubjectivity that transcends species boundaries” (Smuts 2001, 114), I challenge Dwyer’s (2007, 74) contention that reptiles are “non-companion species”. Equally, the findings, thus far, illustrate that chameleons do not warrant their literary reputations as ‘supernatural oddities’ (cf. Martin 1992). Instead, I posit that Camilla should be viewed as a companion animal.

However, as with close human relationships, those between people and Camilla are not only characterised by commitment and rewards, they are also shaped by ambivalence and problems (cf. Sanders 2011). Whilst Camilla did not evoke a feeling of fear in any of the leisure users that I spoke with, it must be emphasised that Camilla was only seen on screen during the focus groups, not in person. The notion of a mutual feeling of fear between Camilla and one of her caregivers, Matt, became evident during a face-to-face encounter. Matt explained this to me during my observations:

When we used to get Camilla out for the ‘meet the creepy critters’ session, parents would often take flash photos, ya know, of their kids stroking her and whatnot. But this scared Camilla. And I mean, it wasn’t just Camilla that was scared, I was, and the kids were too, her facial expression made me scared she may bite me.

Although Markwell and Cushing (2009) contend that opportunities for visitors to touch reptiles can diminish the boundaries between the leisure user and the exhibited, in this instance, the opposite occurred. To expand, children typically ‘stroked’ Camilla – suggesting a loving, pet-like, relationship. However, on this occasion, the opportunity for tactile engagement resulted in visitors to the Park, the caregiver, and Camilla, experiencing feelings of fear. Camilla is, of course, an individual, with her own personality and temperament; it is thus worth recognising that other chameleons may have enjoyed this contact. Nonetheless, in Camilla’s case, the upshot was that the boundary between visitor and exhibited became more rigid than before. Nonetheless, this section has illustrated that Camilla is both an *affective* and *affected* being; this accords with Foster’s (2012) contention that the ability of reptiles to experience emotions has been underestimated. Further, through showing how fear can be shared through encounters (Keul, 2013) I have proposed that the affectivity inherent in the Camilla-human leisure experience is, in some ways, reciprocal.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Throughout this chapter, I drew on Milton’s (2005) approach of egomorphism. Egomorphism, as an approach interested in the self/ego, was useful for exploring Camilla’s ‘leisure’ experiences. Moreover,

it transpires that egomorphism is also useful for providing insight into Camilla's labour/work experiences. For example, how Camilla performs for the gaze of leisure users and her emotions experienced when doing so (e.g. happy; desired attention; or wished to be left alone). This research should thus be credited with extending the boundaries of egomorphism beyond its previous mammal and bird-centric forms. I would urge more scholars to use this empathetic methodological approach as a means of bringing to the fore the leisure and labour experiences of individual animals.

I consider that Camilla's location in a human constructed leisure space is somewhat useful for clarifying misconceptions about chameleons. Due to the spatial proximity, and daily encounter, a sense of interspecies sharing may flourish (Buller, 2012). To elaborate, the Theme Park provides a space in which people can relate to and recognise embodied similarities with Camilla; in this way, people may learn to negotiate their fears (Keul, 2013). Camilla's positioning in the Theme Park may be seen as a mutually beneficial experience - as chameleons become repositioned in the public mind (Keul, 2013). Further still, as theme parks are often associated with fun and excitement, such a leisure space may be a beneficial way of socialising people with chameleons from a young age (cf. Badr, 2014 on zoos, as a means of familiarising children with animals).

However, it is important to recognise that the placement of chameleons in captivity for human leisure may well be to the expense of the leisure life of chameleons. For instance, as argued in this chapter, Camilla experienced a feeling of fear when exposed to flash photography during a 'meet the creepy critters' session. Further, during Park opening hours Camilla's everyday life is largely subject to the gaze of Theme Park staff and visitors. Moreover, other than during reptile 'handling times', Camilla's mobility in the Theme Park is restricted, as she is confined to her vivarium. To conclude then, I argue that human leisure should be conceptualised as facilitated by Camilla's labour of presenting herself, and being subject to human gazes, day after day. Nonetheless, by considering Camilla as an affective and active agent, with the ability to shape human feelings and emotions, my research departs from much pre-existing work that considers animals as passive within leisure experiences (Carr, 2010).



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